

Ian Gingrich
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Switch

Switch is a 2012 film by Harry Lynch starring Scott Tinker.

The film Switch claims that our world is thirty years away from a transition from oil and coal to other forms of energy.

Switch lists the world's primary energy sources by following around Scott Tinker on a tour. There is some scientific information provided for each energy source, and the film is trying to create emotional appeal through the scientific information. The film lists the dependence on and output of each energy source that is examined in the tour. Switch claims that based on current trends, we will switch from oil and coal as the world's main energy source to other sources of power in 30 years.

The film focuses on technological, political, and economical sustainability problems. Nonrenewable energy sources are significantly less expensive than renewable energy, creating an economic sustainability problem, because people will use whatever is cheapest. Most of the U.S. uses coal powered electricity because of the large coal supply. Improvements in battery technology could ease the transition to renewable energy by allowing reliance on wind or solar power. Different countries still rely on a variety of energy sources due to availability. Some countries can rely primarily on hydroelectric or geothermal energy based on their geography, but the U.S., India, and China rely on coal for electricity. The U.S. is slowly transitioning away from its reliance on coal, but India and China are rapidly increasing their coal usage, because they are still developing nations. The political problem of increasing populations and need for coal in developing nations is a serious political problem.

The information regarding the future of nuclear power was the most promising technology. Switch claims that nuclear power will need to be a significant portion of the world's energy supply in the future. Nuclear power is one of the few reliable energy sources that is widely available and creates very little pollution. In contrast, the usage of global statistics to attempt to categorize an individual's energy usage was disappointing. The film failed to take into account the rapidly increasing energy usage of an average person when counting the number of people that various energy sources could supply in the future.

Switch is a great film for introducing people to the many sources of energy. Switch clearly outlines the benefits and drawbacks of the energy sources and is a good educational film for individuals who have not worried about the transition to different energy sources before.

Switch suggests working towards increasing the amount of nuclear power plants around the world, and to also suggests the installation of solar panels on homes and university campuses.

The website for the film, switch energy project, does not contain much information about reducing personal energy consumption. I was interested in the world's supply of nuclear energy, and world-nuclear.org indicated that there is 200 years worth of supply of uranium. Breeder reactors dramatically increase the maximum energy output from uranium, but at the current prices of uranium, are not economical.